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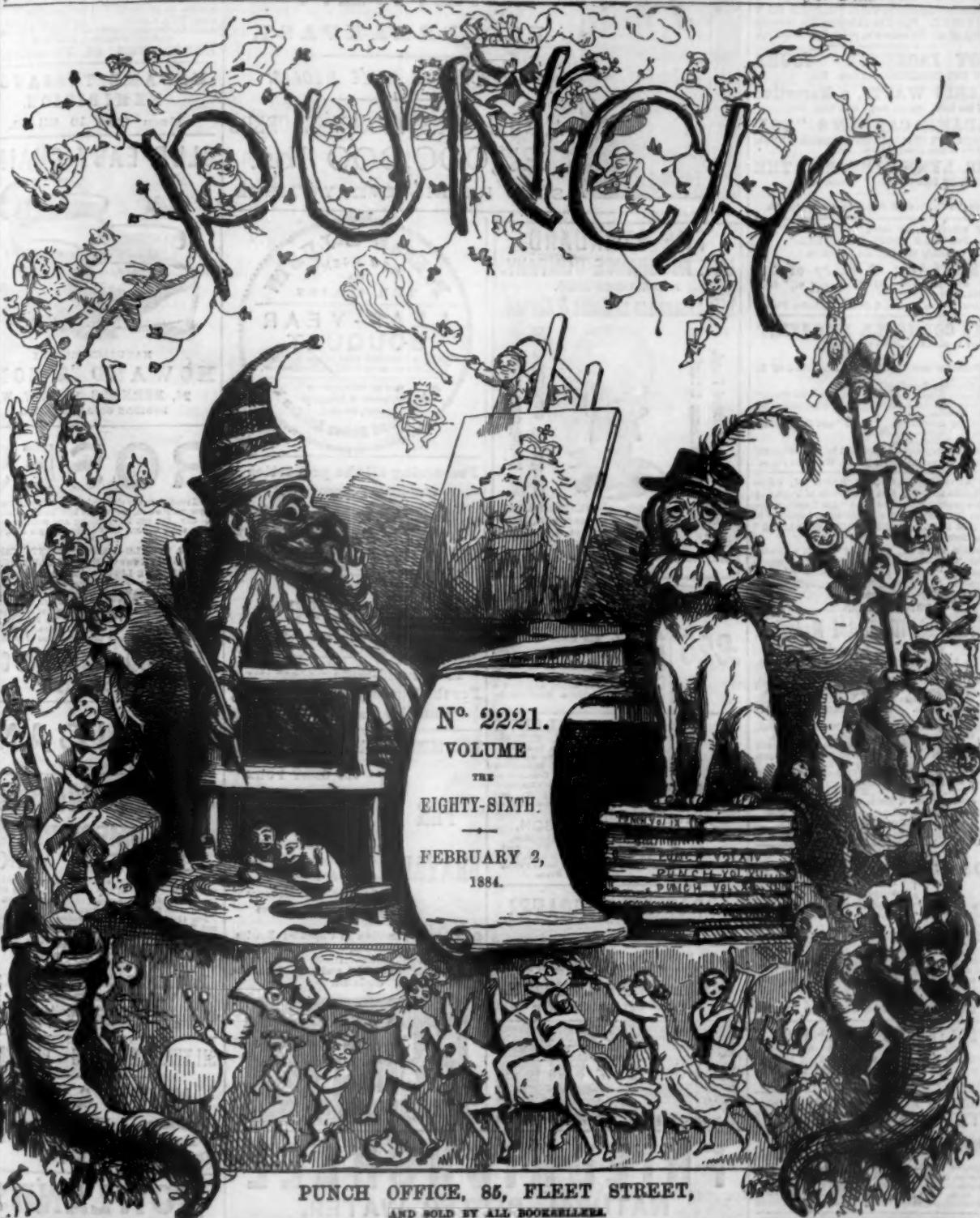
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THE NOTE-BOOK OF A DETECTIVE JOURNALIST.

ATTENDANCE AT A CABINET COUNCIL IN A STATESMAN'S COLLARS.

IMMEDIATELY I received the Editor's telegram, "Assume any disguise you please, but, without fail, find out what is going to appear in the Queen's Speech," I decided upon a course of action. Once again I had to make myself up—this time I had to appear in the character of one of the most eminent men of the century. Mistaken for the PREMIER, I would be admitted to Downing Street—to the Inner Chamber.

Fortunately, it was perfectly easy to carry out my plan. All I had to do was to adopt an ordinary—a very ordinary—morning costume, and a pair of gigantic collars. I was safe from recognition—my head was entirely hidden in the collars.

I walked to Downing Street, and knocked at the door of the PREMIER's residence. It was immediately opened by a bowing and smiling Messenger.

"In future, Sir, you will be able to gain admission more expeditiously. I have been desired to give you this little packet, and to say that the article it contains is again returned to you, on condition that you promise to make no more evening excursions to listen to what she said you called 'The Cry of Outcast London.'"

The Messenger handed me a packet.

"I think I ought to tell you, Sir," continued the Official, "that there seemed to be an impression that you and Sir CHARLES and Mr. BRIGHT are in the habit of seeking for 'the Cry' at the Canterbury, the Oxford, and kindred places of public amusement."

I now opened the packet. It contained a latch-key. Preceded by the Messenger, I ascended a flight of stairs, and found myself in the Saloon devoted to the holding of Cabinet Councils. Here the Messenger bowed, and left me.

It was a plainly-furnished apartment, containing a long table covered with green baize, which was surrounded by some dozen chairs. Most of the Government were present. The Cabinet were scattered about in groups. Here was Mr. CHAMBERLAIN explaining to Lord HARTINGTON his notions about the breeding of race-horses, there was Lord GRANVILLE listening in rapt attention while Sir CHARLES DILKE instructed him in foreign policy. Both Mr. CHILDERS and Sir WILLIAM HARROD were drawing pictures of proposed Ironclads, and attempting to attract the attention for their sketches of no less a person than Lord NORTHBROOK. In the background Lord DERBY was telling Lord KIMBERLEY what he (Lord DERBY) would do were he at the Indian Office; while Lord KIMBERLEY, in return, verbally mapped out the policy he should have pursued had he become Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The moment I entered the Ministers rose, respectfully saluted me, and took their places at the Council-Board, reserving a chair at the head of the table for my accommodation. Suddenly, the LORD CHANCELLOR entered the room in full-bottomed wig and robes of office. There was a general titter at his appearance.

"Really, I see no reason for this merriment," exclaimed his Lordship, angrily. "I was asked to come in this costume, because I was informed, by post-card, that to-day we were to be photographed. I insist upon knowing who sent me that post-card."

There was a dead silence. The Ministers seemed to be earnestly engaged in doing nothing in particular. I could not help thinking, however, that Mr. CHAMBERLAIN seemed ill at ease. This demeanour so suggestive of guilt, also appeared to attract the attention of Lord SELBORNE, who was on the point of addressing the President of the Board, when I considered it time to intervene.

"I am afraid I must claim to be the culprit, my dear LORD CHANCELLOR," I said, from behind my collars, in the voice of Mr. GLADSTONE, which I imitated most successfully. "It was only a practical joke. You all know my playful waggish humour."

The Ministers seemed rather astonished, and the LORD CHANCELLOR suggested that perhaps, after all, the group might be photographed.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord GRANVILLE. "It would be contrary to all precedent. We have none of the accessories. We want a number of half-opened despatch-boxes containing treaties, a few waste-paper baskets to scatter about, overturned, in the foreground and, moreover, should all be sitting on the most uncomfortable of high-backed chairs. Unless the Public see the chairs, the treaties, and the overturned waste-paper basket, they will never believe that the picture represents the meeting of a Cabinet Council."

After a little grumbling, Lord SELBORNE acquiesced, and took his seat. Then there was a pause, and Sir WILLIAM HARROD rose, at the invitation of his colleagues.

"My dear and valued friend," he began, addressing me, "we have been considering what you said to us at our last meeting, and, as you insist upon it so strongly, we consent to the insertion of that joke of yours about *jam satis* in the initial paragraph."

"I only objected to it," continued Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, in a conciliatory tone, "because I thought I had seen it somewhere before."

"And I, because it seemed to me, as an old-fashioned person, a little unconventional to make Her MAJESTY commence her address to

her faithful Lords and Commons with a pun—although I admit the pun was admirable in its mirth-provokingness." It was Lord GRANVILLE who said this.

"I am glad that you give way," I replied, from behind the safe ambush of my collars, and then, wishing to feel my way, suggested that I believed that there had been something said about Egypt at our last meeting.

"Why, we spoke of nothing else," shouted Lord HARTINGTON, suddenly, exchanging his habitual rather gloomy calm for a demeanour suggestive of the fiercest excitement. In a moment there was a perfect babel of voices, in which I could only catch a few fragments of speech, such as "Chinese Gordon," "Immediate evacuation," and "Temporary protectorate." The contention waxed angrier and angrier, until I was really afraid that words would give way to blows. All of a sudden an apparition appeared at the other end of the table—an apparition which filled me with absolute terror.

"Before we discuss Egypt," said this apparition, which included an ordinary—a very ordinary—morning suit and a pair of gigantic collars, "I hope we are all now agreed that the initial paragraph of the Speech shall contain that little joke of mine about *jam satis*." And the apparition chuckled.

The Ministers were perfectly dumb with astonishment. They looked at me and then at the apparition. There was but one question, "Which of the two was Mr. GLADSTONE?"

"I would suggest," said Sir WILLIAM HARROD, timidly, "that the PREMIER should come out of his collars."

"Never!" cried the apparition and myself together. "Give up my collars! Never!" At that moment Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE hurriedly entered the room.

"Pa, I want to ask you a question," cried the youthful Lord of the Treasury, running up to his parent, and embracing him. "You won't be angry at this interruption?"

"The true PREMIER has been discovered by his son!" cried the Ministry *en masse*. "The voice of Nature has spoken!"

This was the last I heard, as five seconds later I was using my utmost expedition in leaving Downing Street.

CLASS AND CLASS.

THAT worthy but slightly obstinate bore, Sir EDWARD WATKIN, has announced to the Shareholders of the South-Eastern Railway Company that "country clergymen, local shopkeepers, landowners, and rich old misers have no right in third-class carriages." As such an excellent authority cannot be gainsaid, we have prepared a table for Sir EDWARD WATKIN's approval, showing each class of carriage which ought to be used for the carriage of each class on the S.E.R.:—

First Class.—Archbishops, Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, Bishops, Barons, Baronets (first-rate), Stockbrokers, Money-Lenders, newly-married couples, Members of Tattersalls', Theatrical Managers, leading Actors and Actresses, operatic *Artistes*, newspaper Editors, Stage-door Keepers, Q.C.'s, Barristers (first-rate), Solicitors (first-rate), Special Correspondents, Members of Parliament, Chorus Ladies, Peers' younger sons, ironmasters, manufacturers, bankers, hotelkeepers, housebreakers, swellmobs, swellmobs, pickpockets (first-rate), landowners, rich old misers, and Sir EDWARD WATKIN himself.

Second Class.—Government clerks, City clerks, market-gardeners, country clergymen (rectors, vicars, &c.), local shopkeepers, prompters, second principals, baronets (second-rate), younger sons of younger sons, barristers (second-rate), solicitors (second-rate), barmaids (first-rate), estate agents, Ladies of the Ballet (first rank), innkeepers, housebreakers, swellmobs, swellmobs, pickpockets (second-rate), moderately well-off old misers, and Sir EDWARD WATKIN's chef, valet, coachman, and governess themselves.

Third Class.—Curates, dog-dealers, labourers, under-gardeners, local sub-shopkeepers, call-boys, younger sons of younger sons' younger sons, potboys, hop-pickers, barmaids (second-rate), maids of all work, beershop-keepers, Ladies of the Ballet (second rank), Gentlemen of the Chorus, costermongers, housebreakers, swellmobs, swellmobs, pickpockets (third-rate), area-sneaks, policemen, soldiers, sailors, and Sir EDWARD WATKIN's scullions, boot-blacks, stable-helps, and bottle-washers themselves.

By the way, Sir EDWARD WATKIN asserted that, according to *Mr. Punch*, wherever the South-Eastern went everything seemed to perish and decay. In opposition to this Sir EDWARD averred that wherever the railway had gone land formerly worth £50 an acre had risen from £500 to £2000. Sir EDWARD ought to know that, from an agricultural point of view, rot and decay are highly beneficial to land.

THE AFTER-PIECE AT THE LYCEUM (by an Impressionist).—A success for Miss ANDERSON. Title and Play rather mixed. Comedy and Tragedy (like Caesar and Pompey) very much alike, especially Tragedy. A nice, crisp little melodrama, just long enough to send an audience home mournfully to bed and a nightmare. Like same Author's *Creatures of Impulse*, unquestionably clever. Mr. GILLIER seems always at his very best in One Act.



THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE LEFT UNSAID.

*Dearest Friend (admiring the New Portrait). "HOW SWEET! HOW CHARMING!
HOW PRETTY! AND YET SO LIKE!!"*

THE LATEST CRAZE.

(Letters from a young Gentleman of Fashion who "Adopted the Stage as a Profession.")

MY DEAR DUCHESS,

It is indeed a world of woe and work for the Jolly Jack Puddings created to amuse and entertain others. That dreadful Notice-Board I spoke of now informs us that Miss POSTER will take her first Annual Benefit on Thursday, Mr. GARRICK (who you know is leaving) has a Benefit on Friday, when three Dramas are going to be produced, Saturday is again a Grand Special Night, and Monday is the Benefit of the Gentleman who supplies the soda-water in the front of the house. Mr. EXCELSIOR MAC ALPIN I see appears in a variety of parts each night. But I won't give in. I think by about the end of next week I shall have appeared as everything—kings, earls, blind Jews, beggars, drunkards, footmen, young and old men in every profession under the sun, and belonging to every nation. It is also announced that we start shortly for our Grand Tour in the Southern District.

I asked Mr. GARRICK to dinner yesterday, but, poor thing! he'd no appetite. I'm afraid he drinks nasty mixtures, like rum-and-butter, or gin-and-bitters, or things I thought only Cabmen took after being exposed to the wet. Mr. GARRICK calls it "having a wet," so perhaps he gets wet first, in order to enjoy these drinks the more. But he gets so dreadfully low-spirited after it. He is our Low Comedian. But then that's a different sort of "low." I wanted to cheer him up, and I'd ordered what I thought he'd like, but he stuck almost entirely to brandy and pickles, which must be bad for anyone. Perhaps this is the reason for his not having succeeded in his profession as he deserves to have done, for, by his conversation, he evidently is a thorough dramatic artist.

I hope to profit by some of the "tips" he gave me. For example, he told me that country audiences forgive anything but nervous floundering; they applaud the sentiment, and not the Actor; and thus, rather than "stick" (which is a sure signal for derisive shouts), it is better to insert such a speech as the following:—

"I belong to that noble nation whose proudest boast it is that e'en her meanest subjects have liberty and protection 'neath her banner."

It does not the least matter what part one is trying to interpret. The sentiment is sure to be applauded; and in the meanwhile one has time to remember what one ought to have said, or to "Exit"—it's a beautiful exit!

Miss POSTER has let our Theatre to some Amateurs next Monday, and we are all to go over to Seaborough to act. Miss POSTER has asked me to whip up all my friends at Seaborough, but I have none. Lady AWERBERRY has gone. I went over there yesterday, to see if I could ferret out somebody I knew. But no. I'm afraid we shall have a very bad house. Nobody cares to go to the Play at Seaborough. By the bye, Miss MARCH has a private lunatic asylum there for Ladies; and Lady ANNE PARCHMENT has been under her care for thirty-four years. She is a relation of our family, and I think I shall give Miss MARCH a couple of tickets for herself and Lady PARCHMENT, that is if the latter can come without being very violent.

Yours ever, HUGO DE B***.

THE PARIAH PEN.

(*Being the Bitter Cry of an Outcast Goosequill.*)

[The *Times* says that in England "Literary Society is something by itself. It is not one with general Society, as it is in Paris."]

PITY the Pen! It is—of course—precisely
The great World-fulerum ARCHIMEDES wanted,
Or some who've sung its praise, as they thought, wisely,
Have simply canted.

It moves the World (who doubts it but a blunderer?),
Propelled by great Philosophers and Poets,
Or—both in one—that glory of the Thunderer,
Our Jovian BLOWITZ.

More mighty than the Sword!—at least we're told so
By Truth's two tongues, lyric and leading article.
The vehicle of soul! what else can hold so
The Immortal Particle?

Palladium of the State, its chief defender
Ready to cut down wrong and to inter vice.
The geese saved Rome, but now our goose-quills render
The self-same service.

The ties of Party it can loose or make fast,
The footsteps of a danger-fronting host track,
And tell the tale to BUGGINS at his breakfast,
Times prop't on toast-rack.

Report what Continents have, in might or fun, done;
Lift prostrate peoples, tyrants cause to tumble;
And with the "Bitter Cry of Outcast London"
Scare even BUMBLE.

Takes notes of Emperor's talk and chat of kingling,
Tell what Grand Dukes have done or purpose doing.
(Such Mightinesses Pen-men always singling
For entre-nous-ing.)

"Report" a Duchess's post-prandial prattle,
Or the *tutoiements* of a Princess affable.
(Grand Dames no doubt find Pen's agreeable rattle
Extremely laughable.)

If there's a secret, deep, dark, diplomatic,
Pen may be trusted to divine or plumb it,
To explore the Home from servants' hall to attic,
From base to summit.

If boredom good society be the key of,
Just look at Party "leaders" *inter alia*.
Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie should make Pen free of
Its *penetralia*!

And yet what says the *Times*? Ah me, the pity!
As social pet Pen is the choice of Paris,
That patronage in our Boetian city
We're told quite rare is.

Poor Pen! Society's darlings cold and curled
Are Pen-shunners. Alas! what can it profit
To purge and permeate, mould and move "the World,"
Yet not be of it?

THE BOURNEMOUTH BREACH OF PROMISE ON APPEAL.—The MILLER may be jolly now, but where does the JOY come in?



JANUARY GEMS.

VERY TRYING.

A Record of a few Trials of Patience.

No. IV.—THE GOOD-HUMOURED MAGISTRATE.



MR. PUMMIE was charged before Mr. BOWERS, the presiding Magistrate, with assaulting CHARLES SHORT.

The Complainant (who had a black eye) deposed:—On Tuesday, your Worship, I was standing on a seat in the Strand, waiting for the Lord Mayor's Procession to pass. About four rows in front of me was the back of a man who I thought was ALF WATSON.

Mr. Bowers. And who is ALF WATSON?

Complainant. He is a packer at the Stores, you know.

Mr. Bowers. Well, I didn't know, but I'm always pleased to receive information. I hope he'll stick to his packing-cases, and keep out of assault cases. (*Laughter.*) However, we

had better not interrupt the evidence.

Complainant. Let's see—where was I?—oh, I know. Well, your Worship, the man in front, who I thought was ALF WATSON, turned out to be Defendant.

Mr. Bowers. What made you think it was ALF WATSON?

Complainant. The back of his head looked like ALF's.

Mr. Bowers. Oh, I see—a phonological similarity.

Complainant. May be, your Worship. All I know is, some people's backs of their head is more recognisable than the fronts of their face. Look at the back of my head.

[The Witness here turned his back to the learned Magistrate, and displayed a triangular bald patch, which created considerable amusement in Court.]



Open Spaces.

Mr. Bowers. It would be as well, I think, to let the evidence now proceed without interruption.

Complainant. Well, your Worship, I calls out, "Hullo, ALF WATSON!" and I leant over, and touched him gently on the back of his head with my stick—just so.

[The Complainant lightly tapped with his stick the ledge of the witness-box.]

Mr. Bowers. A rather striking illustration.

Defendant (interrupting). Not a bit like it, your Worship. He tapped me like this.

[The Defendant here struck with his stick a tremendous blow on the ledge of the prisoner's dock.]

Mr. Bowers. I cannot help thinking that that is a violent assault upon the Court. (*Loud laughter, in which the Chief Usher joined.*) Now I think we must let the case proceed without interruption.

Complainant. At all events, your Worship, I didn't hurt him.

Defendant. Oh, didn't you? Perhaps your Worship would like to look at my head.

[The Defendant turned his back to the Magistrate, and displayed a large confusion.]

Mr. Bowers. Of course it's impossible to judge at this distance, but it appears to me to resemble an extra development of the bump of Philoprogenitiveness. However, I will hear your defence at the proper time, Defendant; so please don't let us interrupt the Witness.

Complainant. What I meant, your Worship, was, if it had been my friend ALF WATSON it would not have hurt him.

Mr. Bowers. You mean—some heads are softer than others, and more sensitive to the touch.

Complainant. Yes, your Worship. Why, bless you, ALF WATSON's chump is as hard as a brick.

Mr. Bowers. You call him your friend—I can't help thinking he would not care to hear you say what you have, about him.

Complainant. He don't mind. He's here to prove it!

Mr. Bowers. I'm afraid I can't admit his evidence. Don't you see—the evidence of a man who doesn't mind being hit at the back of the head with a stick, cannot possibly affect the case of a man who does object to it. (*Laughter.*) But you really must proceed with your evidence.

Complainant. The Defendant turned round, and I said, "It's a mistake—I thought you were ALF WATSON." The Defendant, in reply, said, "Oh, is it? Wait till the Show has passed, and I'll ALF WATSON you in the eye."

Mr. Bowers. A new form of assault, evidently. And what passed then?

Complainant. The Lord Mayor's Show did. (*Laughter.*) The Defendant then came down on me like a ton of bricks, as my eye will prove.

Mr. Bowers. Ocular evidence. (*To Defendant.*) Now is your time to ask any question of the Witness.

Defendant. Thanks, your Worship. (*To Witness.*) What's your name?

Complainant. SHORT.

Defendant. All right. I'll soon make short work of you.

[*Roars of laughter, in which the Magistrate joined.* Complainant (indignantly). I don't consider this a case for joking, your Worship.

Mr. Bowers. You are right there; but I can't, in justice, rebuke a man for joking, when I've been doing it myself; therefore, I'll adjourn the case for a week, by which time, I hope, we shall all be in a more serious mood.

Biddy Flaherty, Molly O'Finnigan, Kate O'Leary, Patrick Mulgan, O. B. Jagers, Thady O'Flynn, Dan Dunnomore, and Phil Flanagan were summoned before Mr. BOWERS, charged with illegally detaining two bonnets, a towel-horse, a pair of blankets, a flat-iron, two pairs of pattens, a woollen shawl, and a bottle of whiskey, alleged to be the property respectively of BETSY O'HAGAN, KATHERINE CORK, MARY MUNSTER, PADDY MURPHY, and PHINEAS O'CONNOR.

Mr. Bowers. Ah! This is evidently going to be an interesting case. (*Laughter.*)

The first Witness called was P.C. Jon, 297 Z. He said:—On Wednesday week I visited 4, Durham's Rents, the first floor of which is occupied by all the parties connected with this case. I was called in by the complainant, BETSY O'HAGAN, who said—

Biddy Flaherty. You lie, you lie!

Phil Flanagan. Spake the truth.

O. B. Jagers. To the devil with ye!

Dan Dunnomore. Och, ye spalpeen!

Phil Flanagan. Where d'y expect to go to?

Pat Mulgan. Ye tell more truth when ye spake lies.

[There was great uproar, and when the Usher at length succeeded in procuring silence—]



Mr. Bowers.

Mr. Bowers said:—As this case will apparently be rather complicated, I wish to make a suggestion. I don't so much mind two of you talking together; in fact, I can sometimes manage three, but it's quite impossible for me to understand six of you at once, especially as you are very indistinct, and this is a very bad Court for sound.

The Officer again proceeded with his evidence, but the interruptions and abuse became worse than ever.

Mr. Bowers (to the Defendant). Look here, if you don't leave off, I shall not only adjourn the case for a week, but I shall go on adjourning it till I do get silence.

Patrick Mulgan. Yer Honour, bedad, I'm not going to stand here, and hear them lies.

Mr. Bowers. Oh! aren't you? Very well, then, you shan't. I'll adjourn you for a week, at all events.

[*The Defendant was then removed, amidst much laughter.*

Biddy Flaherty. I'll not desert PAT MULGAN. Let me go, too?

Mr. Bowers. By all means. Consider yourself adjourned *sine die*.

Biddy Flaherty. Thank ye, yer Majesty. May you and Ould Ireland live for ever!

[*The confusion at last became so great, that Mr. Bowers ordered the parties engaged to leave the Court, an order which was not obeyed in a single instance.*

Mr. Bowers. Well, as you won't leave the Court, I will; and I'll take very good care I do not return until you have left.

[*The learned Magistrate then retired.*



AN IRISH CASE; OR, ERIN AND TALKING.

"ICH DIEN."

HONOURED SIR,

I AM a widower with four children—this is my misfortune, not my fault. So also is the fact that I am absolutely without menial assistance. Yet again is another fact: viz., that on Tuesday last I attended Mrs. BUNSHAW'S Agency for Domestic Servants, whither I was directed by a Lady who has been kind enough to endeavour to alleviate my misfortunes. Like myself, she is solitary in the midst of plenty of children. On arriving at Mrs. BUNSHAW'S outer office, I was reminded by a smiling young female of some forty Summers (without counting her Springs, Winters, and Autumns), that five shillings was the customary fee for "registering."

Following Sir ROBERT PEEL'S advice, I promptly but not unreluctantly did so, at the same time timidly inquiring for a Parlour-maid. In return for my two half-crowns, the damsel handed me a ticket inscribed as follows:—

TERMS—FIVE SHILLINGS

For each Servant required. No Alteration can be made in the description of Servant booked for.

The address of Lady and Servant must be exchanged on partial engagement.

THIS TICKET EXPIRES

Directly the Servant enters upon her Situation.

Armed with this domestic railway-ticket, I entered a long room, around which were posted various groups of the gentler sex (not a male among them), who, like myself, had "booked for" Servant-galism. Scarcey had I looked round, when a stentorian voice shouted, "Mr. DIONYSIUS JONES," and I blushingly cast my eyes down on my ticket, as three or four young women made towards me. At the same time, I remembered that I was not a Lady, and that "a partial engagement" was associated only in my mind with a strong attachment or a breach of promise.

"Eighteen pound a-year, beer-money, and the usual Sunday out," cried a voice, in my ear.

I looked up, and beheld a slender swallow-faced young female, who had evidently tried to make up for the skimpiness of her figure by the breadth of her hat-brim, and for the want of blood in her cheeks by the fiery hues of her ribbons and shawl.

"That seems a good deal," I ventured to falter.

"It would be a good deal for some people," she replied, tartly. "How about the beer-money?"

"I provide the beer myself," I answered, firmly. "Are you a churchgoer?" I added, wishing to turn the subject, not knowing where the "partial engagement" began or ended.

"Yes," she sniggered, "when it's cold meat on Sundays."

"I'm afraid you won't do," I began, when she cut me short with,

"No, I don't suppose I should. Mother says I ought to be particular."

In less than ten seconds she was engaged in negotiations with an elderly lady on my right.

"You're not a lodgings-ouse keeper, I 'ope, 'cos I 'ad to leave my last place on account of the dreffil 'ard work. Six dinners a-day, b'lieve me. Fust at one for the old gent with brown kits in the parlours, then for the old lady with paralise in the droring-rooms at two, then for the newly married couple on the second floor at three, then for the City gents at 'arif-past five, then for Missus off what they'd leff at 'arif-past six, and then off what Missus 'ad left, supper-like, for me—oh! Sir, it was offal. But if you're not a lodgings-ouse keeper, I'm ready for the sitivation. My name's MARTHA CRACKLES."

The speaker was a determined-looking female, with any amount of cheekbone, a glance like a bull's-eye lantern, and a hand as broad as a spade. Had I been a woman, she would have been my mistress, as it was, I felt I was in presence of my master. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I was about to surrender, when an angel (figuratively, not literally) came to my rescue, in the person of an old woman, with threescore years, and twice that amount of feathers pressing on her brow, who passed by us. My antagonist (doubtless recognising her), without a word of apology, hurried in pursuit. When next I saw MARTHA CRACKLES, she had that old angel, carefully laid by, under her right arm.

A prepossessing-looking female, dressed in deep mourning, next approached me, in a somewhat timid manner.

"I understand, Sir," she said, "that you're looking for a parlour-maid. I also understand, Sir, that you are a widower. Sir, I can sympathise with you, for I am, alas! a widow"—(here she grasped my hand)—"and mean to remain so. My poor dear husband"—(here four square inches of calico evacuated her pocket)—"was of superior birth. He was town butler in a nobleman's family, but his prquisites, Sir, were not of that commanding nature (owing to the poverty of his employers) to enable me to enjoy that position which is mine by right and nature. Sir, you have a feeling eye, and I well know what sympathy means. (Here the calico travelled to her eyes.) The situation of parlour-maid is not one that I desire, but it may lead to other and better things. (I began to remember the "partial engagement" clause.) And if one stricken heart can strike with another, let that lot be mine. (Here she clutched both my hands, and accompanied the movement with a sacrificial odour of gin.) Let that solace be mine. I only ask twenty pounds a year as a solace for my affliction. I only ask—"

I did not let her ask anything else. I fled from Mrs. BUNSHAW'S. My courage expired before my ticket. I am laying my own table. The situation is mine. Try your own *café au lait*, is the advice of

Yours joyfully, DIONYSIUS JONES.

THE SEX OF OYSTERS.—All females. Mollusks.



ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.

Local Butcherman. "IT'S IN FUST-RATE CONDITION, YER GRACE, AND I SHALL BE MOST 'APPY TO SELL IT TO YER GRACE FOR TEN POUNDS!" [Feelings of noble M.F.H. may be imagined.]

GETTING A LIFT!

Grand Old Man of the (Red) Sea loquitur—

"For this relief much thanks!" "Twas getting nasty.
This is stroke of luck!
This dark Egyptian slime is slab and pasty,
I felt like getting stuck.
J'y suis, j'y reste, with rather a new meaning,
Appeared to be my motto.
On broken reeds a little tired of leaning,
And not sure where I'd got to,
I felt as awkward as infallibility
Can ever feel. No doubt of it,
I might have trusted my well-tried agility,
At last, to get me out of it.
But folks are so impatient. Why, a pyramid
Was not built in a jiffy.
But then wild Tory gibes and Jingo ire amid
E'en my Rad friends get tiffy.
Just look at the *Pall Mall* now! Surely, surely,
They might awhile have waited,
And by the organ once ground on by MORLEY
To be—yes, almost slated,
Is rather trying. Well, their tip was GORDON,
And so I hope they're gratified,
And that he likes the shifting of the burden.
I really feel beatified
At missing its worst drag. If he should stumble
'Twould bring us both to grief;
But they who clamoured for him scarce can grumble.
Meanwhile what a relief
To have his sturdy legs and broad back under one
Through this Egyptian mess!
He's a strong man, who is not given to blunder, one
Whose habit is success.

A *deus ex machina*, who, at this crisis,
'Tis rare good luck to get.
If he can solve our mystery of Isis,
We may be happy yet!

THE CURSE OF CANE.

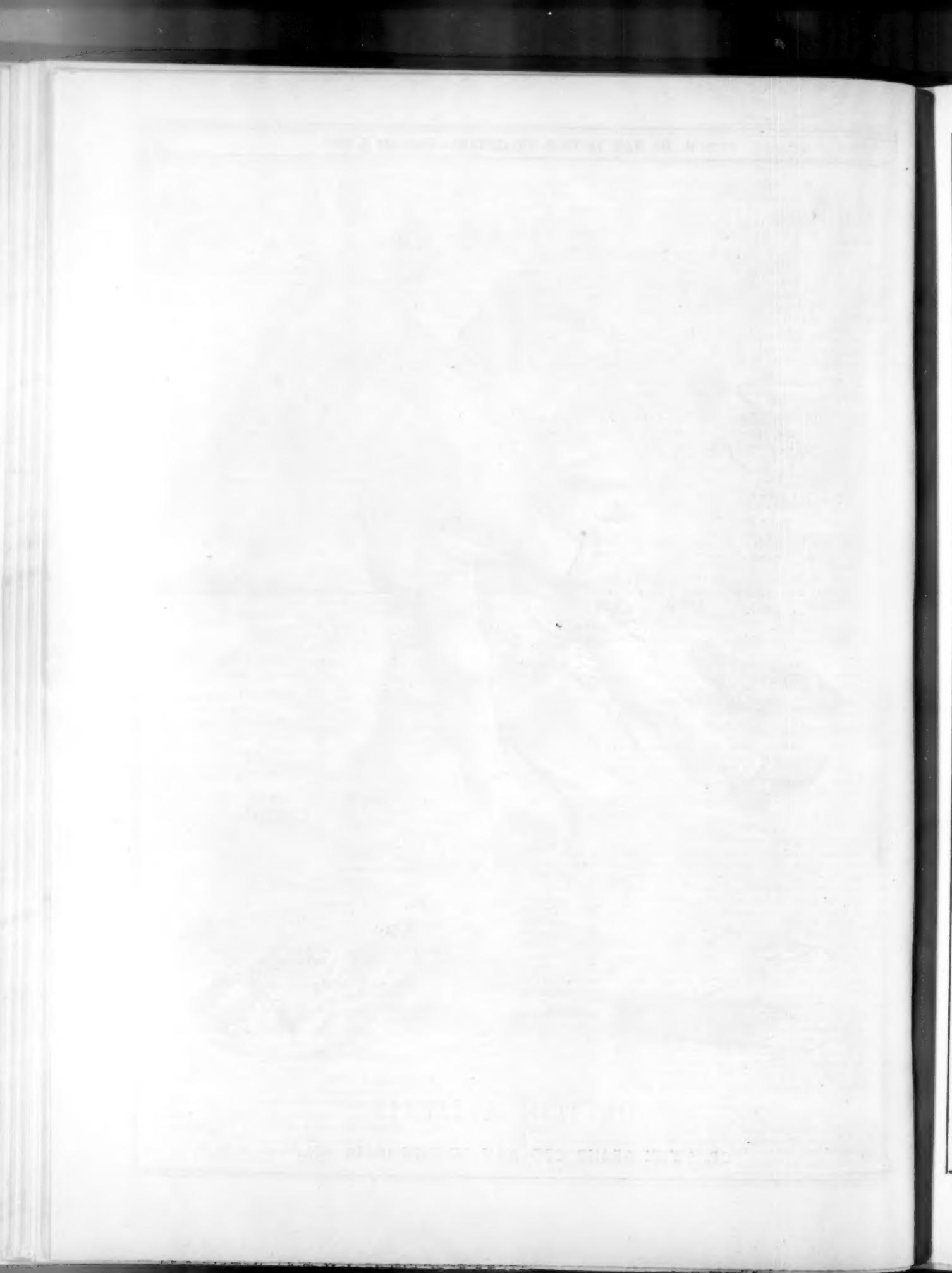
AN Evening Contemporary falls foul of "a learned Baronet who presides over a County Court," because that Gentleman prefers the birch to the cane," and the Evening Contemporary goes on to state that, "if boys were consulted, it is certain that they would prefer the cane." Would they? Not if they were wise boys. The cane is an abominable relic of the Middle Ages, devoted to those of tender years. The cane is a thing of much weal, and no end of woe. It is an instrument of torture which makes the punishment of years pay for the fault of an hour, as witness, the enlarged knuckles, the ingrowing nails, the scarred shoulders and arms of thousands of men, who will bear the Curse of Cane as long as they are able. Now, the birch, even taken in the bud, tempers justice with mercy. It is furious in its onslaught, stinging in its attack, resolute in its chastisement, but it is a generous foe, and bears no resentment. When an Eton boy has been "swished," he is never obliged to carry his arm in a sling, nor call in a Surgeon to bind up his wounds. He may suffer some temporary personal inconvenience for a few days, affecting both his chair (Fr.) and his chair (Engl.), but there the matter will end (unless, indeed, he be "complained of" again). To sum up: the cane is the weapon of a fool, often of a coward, and, maybe, of a brute. The birch is an instrument to which the highest-born have and may bow, for are they not brought to the highest legal punishment—the block.

THE SACRED BEAST.—There has been some mistake about the colour of the Elephant. He turns out to be grey; his companion is WHITE. What his hue may ultimately be, it is impossible to say, but it is certain that he has had a good "slating" all round.



GETTING A LIFT!

OR, "THE GRAND OLD MAN OF THE (RED) SEA."



LETTERS TO SOME PEOPLE

ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS.

1. To Miss Victoria Vokes, at Her Majesty's, about Lotta, at the Opéra Comique, and, 2, to Mr. George Grossmith, at the Savoy, about "Falka," at the Comedy.

1. To Miss Victoria Vokes, at Her Majesty's.

MY DEAR MISS VICTORIA,

As your time is entirely taken up by playing *Little Red Riding Hood*, for which I see you are having extra special Morning Performances, you will be very glad to hear from me what our latest visitor from America, *Lotta*, is doing at the Opéra Comique.

In exchange for Mr. IRVING and Miss ELLEN TERRY, you see they have given us Miss MARY ANDERSON, Miss MINNIE PALMER, and the above-mentioned, *Lotta*,—whether she is a *Mademoiselle* or a Madame I cannot gather from the Advertisement,—but if you and

witness the achievements of one of his evidently most earnest and admiring pupils.

In other respects Mr. WYATT is rather too serious for *Dick Swiveller*; he would make a capital first dancing tragedian, if there be such a person, and I don't see why there should not be a Hamlet in a ballet as well as in an opera; suggest this to your brother FREDERICK; he, as *Hamlet*, you, as *Ophelia*, in a ballet all arms and legs, and no songs or dialogue.

Mr. PATEMAN's *Quilp* is a very clever performance, but not sufficiently impish; if he and Miss HOWARD, who makes a charming *Mrs. Quilp*, had only had a good song and dance together, just as Mr. WYATT and *Lotta* have, and if the four had then all combined for a jig, with Mr. WYATT throwing his legs alternately over the heads of Miss HOWARD and *Lotta*, it would have been more consistent with the spirit of the adaptation, and I am sure that both you and your brother would have enthusiastically declared that such an *ensemble* must bring down the house, and ensure a run of three or four hundred nights.

Probably the idea first struck *Lotta* of playing the *Marchioness* in her topsy-turvy fashion, and then, having taken an inch, it occurred to her that she might as well take a *Nell*. Certainly, she herself is the greatest curiosity in the *Old Curiosity Shop*, and if she would only get Mr. CHARLES DICKENS to eliminate all the sentiment, and call the piece *The Marchioness*, with songs and dances for everybody, it would draw all London.

With kind regards to Brer Fox and Brer Wolf in your Pantomime, I remain, my dear Miss VICTORIA,

Your old friend,
NIMH.

2. To Mr. George Grossmith, at the Savoy.

MY DEAR GEE-GEE,

WHICH is, of course, addressing you by your initials as I explained in a previous letter, when, in proper order, I put the horse before the Carte, though you are the last man to indulge in any horse-play on the stage. Thoroughly occupied, as you are, with rehearsing, playing, entertaining, and various other employments (for I have heard it whispered that you have the entire management of a considerable small coal and potato warehouse in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, to which you give your attention when not assisting the Editor of the *Quarterly Review*, or making notes for the Astronomer Royal in Greenwich Observatory), you have not been able to gratify the one desire of your heart, which is, as you told me, when Messrs. GILBERT and SULLIVAN were well out of hearing, to see *Falka* at the Comedy Theatre, and as you asked me to go, I went, and I will now tell you all about it.

It is the very sort of piece you would enjoy, not depending on the comicality, or even the singing of one person, but on the united efforts of one of the best comic operatic companies that have been seen in London for some considerable time. Had you been in the Stalls with me, there would have been no holding you, so supremely delighted would you have been with the dry drollery of Mr. HARRY PAULTON, the comic idiocy of Mr. KELLEHER, the eccentricity of Mr. ASHLEY, the hopeless absurdity of Mr. PENLEY, the laughable



"They've been a 'tizing of me."—*Old Curiosity Shop*.

your brother saw her, I am perfectly sure that the latter would say, in his quaintly humorous way, that she is decidedly "not a-miss. You would be charmed with her dancing and her grotesque attitudes, and would roar with laughter at her eccentric movements, the like of which I have never seen equalled on any Stage.

As to the piece in which she appears, of course you know by heart every line of DICKENS'S *Old Curiosity Shop*, and, therefore, you would fail to recognise in it any of the merits and beauties of that delightful story, so utterly has it been hashed, sliced, smashed, and transmogrified by its Adapter, in order to suit the requirements of the eccentric *Lotta*, and, I suppose, American taste, as far as she is concerned.

It is true that you see before you the old Grandfather, *Little Nell*, Mr. Richard Swiveller, *Quilp*, *Sampson*, and *Sally Brass*, but they appear in very slightly-connected scenes, and thus more resemble illustrations of character in a Variety Entertainment than dramatic personages in a real Play. They are names, and little more. So that of the Adapter, Mr. CHARLES DICKENS, one might say, with the old Clerk in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, "His own son, Sir! his own son, Sir!" and with Mr. Swiveller, sing the poet's line, slightly altered,

"When he who adapts thee has left but the name,"

which I am sure strikes you as most applicable to this "pur-version," as Mr. GILBERT would call it, of the *Old Curiosity Shop*.

You, my dear Miss VICTORIA, with your great reverence for old familiar tales, would as soon think of asking your author, Mr. FRANK GREEN, to make the meek and gentle *Cinderella* into a bouncing, dancing hoyden, or dear simple *Little Red Riding Hood* into a grown-up tomboy, who fearlessly confronts the *Wolf*, fights and conquers him, as have asked the Editor of *Household Words* to reduce *Little Nell* to a posturing nonentity, and to have transformed the *Marchioness* into a genuine "Yankee gal."

Lotta's Marchioness is a sort of white *Topsy*, which is a very topsy-turvy way of dealing with the character, and when I quite got rid of all the associations of this part with the original of DICKENS'S creation, I thoroughly enjoyed, as you would have done had you been there, *Lotta's* extraordinary antics. You will be pleased to hear, though she has not much voice, she knows how to manage and make the most of it, and sings in excellent tune, and tell your leader—no, I mean your Manager, Mr. LEADER, what I know will delight his generous heart—that in spite of the badness of the piece, *Lotta* herself is likely to prove a very great success.

If you can get a spare minute, do take your brother to see Mr. WYATT dancing as *Dick Swiveller*, and he will be enchanted to



Knife and Falka.

burlesque-style of Mr. HAMILTON, and the careful character-acting of Mr. JAMES FRANCIS; and if Miss LEONORA BRAHAM had been seated with us, she would have been in raptures with the singing and acting of Miss VIOLET CAMERON, and the dashing appearance and artistic vocalisation of Miss WADMAN. There are plenty of small parts, all with more or less singing and speaking, and all satisfactorily played.

Sir ARTHUR SULLIVAN would be pleased with the music by Monsieur CHASSEIGNIE, though he perhaps might find fault with it



A READY-MADE REJOINDER.

He. "YOU MADE A FOOL OF ME WHEN I MARRIED YOU, MA'AM!"
She. "LOR! YOU ALWAYS TOLD ME YOU WERE A SELF-MADE MAN!"

occasionally for lack of originality, and here and there detect a few phrases which, it might occur to him, he had heard somewhere before.

You know, my dear Gee-Gee, what good stage management is, having been so well stage-managed yourself, and your Mr. GILBERT would not have sufficient words of praise for the permutations and combinations of form and colour which Mr. H. B. FARNIE, author and stage manager, has contrived to exhibit throughout the three Acts of *Falka*. I am sure, too, that Mr. GILBERT and yourself will thoroughly approve of the absence of all long speeches from the libretto, and that both will appreciate the ingenuity of Mr. FARNIE who, as the action of the piece takes place in 1750, and the scene is laid in Hungary, has enriched his dialogue with comic but direct allusions to the topics of the present day, both social and political, in such a plain matter-of-fact way as cannot fail to be intelligible to the newspaper readers of all shades of opinion in the mixed audience that, as Mr. D'OXEY CARTE will be delighted to hear, crowd this theatre every night, and leave it thoroughly amused and delighted with the entertainment.

By the way, your sense of the fitness of things will probably induce you to remonstrate with the Author of *Falka* for making Mr. HARRY PAULTON constantly address Mr. PENLEY as "Holy Father," when Mr. FARNIE himself has carefully described this character in the bill as "Lay-brother Pelican, door-keeper of the Convent." Take my advice, and as you have nothing to do in the long Second Act of the *Princess Ida*, just put on your ulster and drive round to Panton Street, and see as much as you can of *Falka*. In case you should be enticed to stay over your time, leave word with Mr. CARTE, or Sir ARTHUR SULLIVAN, or Mr. MICHAEL GUNN, or Mr. GILBERT, to go on and double your part, as I don't think you would be missed in that Third Act for once in a way.

With kind regards to Mr. BARRINGTON, who, as I see, makes up in this piece to resemble Mr. BERNARD BECKER, I remain

Yours devotedly, NIBBS.

A REAL "Happy Dispatch" in Chinese GORDON to Egypt. Every one hopes he will succeed. "Why, Soudan!"

A GENUINE "STATES"MAN.—An American.

CHIPS AND SAWDUST.

[LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL at Blackpool, among other vehement denunciations of Mr. GLADSTONE, declared that as a Political Woodman he had given us "nothing but chips."]

To spend four long columns in slating the Woodman,
 Like a farce in three Acts, is but tedious fun.
 How blackly you paint him, vain, volatile good man!
Demogorgon, Domaniel, and Tartuffe in one!
 'Tis pure waste of pigment; you kick o'er the paint-pot,
 And call your splashed canvas a portrait! Dear me!
 If *au grand sérieux* you the Radical's saint pot,
 How dreadfully wretched—or green—you must be!
 But no, 'tis of course mere political jaw-dust,
 You'd never belabour *Old Chips* as you do,
 Or wildly and fruitlessly "let out your sawdust,"
 Unless you'd some practical object in view.
 Bad names why insanely and shriekingly call so?
 Why troupe and denounce, taradiddle and mock?
 Unless 'tis to prove that you, RANDY, are also
 A chip—of the old Beaconsfieldian block?

"TAUNG TALOUNG WILL OBLIGE AGAIN!"

THE White Elephant—we do not care twopence whether he is white, or drab, or slate, or mud-colour, or black, we prefer to call him white—has been as welcome to the newspapers just now as big gooseberries in the dead season. We are grieved, however, to see the following paragraph in the *Times*:

"The Elephant was unusually elated, and made several attempts to stand on his head, attempts which were promptly checked by his keeper."

Can it be that the "sacred" one is nothing but a stage-player, after all; that he is not even a prophet in his own country—though he may make considerable profit for BARNUM out of it—but simply a performing Elephant? It is to be feared the *Times* has let the cat out of the bag; but we wonder who let the Elephant out of the Circus!

MR. GLADSTONE'S MOTTO FOR THE COMING FARMER.—
"Jamjam futurus rusticus."—HOR. EPOD. LIB., ODE II.

SOMETHING LIKE A PLANT!

To quote from the "Literary Jottings" of a Contemporary. It appears that—

"MRS. CHATTO AND WINDUS have in hand a new work by the Author of *The Village Life*, Mr. J. H. STODDAERT, Editor of the *Glasgow Herald*, under the title of *The Sagacity and Morality of Plants: a Sketch of the Life and Conduct of the Vegetable Kingdom*."

This is certainly news, and opens up, especially for that advanced and select class of thinkers who hold that man himself is but a well-developed, if not very palatable vegetable, a fine field for reflective speculation. Indeed, nobody, who has a fancy for his modest salad, can read the announcement unmoved; and to those who have found themselves, after a little free indulgence in the apparently harmless bowl overnight, not unfrequently consigned, the next morning, to a sort of Stygian gloom of despondency, it can scarcely fail to come home with significant force. That there may be some inherent vice in a cucumber, for instance, seems more than probable;—still, it is difficult, all at once, to take in fully the conception, either of an intelligent pumpkin, or of a badly-conducted radish. It is to be hoped, however, that Mr. STODDAERT will not leave the unsuspecting housekeeper in the dark, but give a good and clear character-list of all the inhabitants of the kitchen-garden likely to find their way into his premises. Anyhow, the subject is full of interest, and suggests much. Why should there not be a link of sympathy between man and the cabbage he eats? Is it that both have hearts? Again, what hidden tenderness is it that forces one who gazes long at the onion that has been much cut up, to melt in tears, and turn sadly, but hurriedly away? These are psychological riddles that Mr. STODDAERT, no doubt, will solve. By the way, if he prove, beyond a question, that the potato has a real eye for beauty, and that a head of celery, if it only keep cool, is fit for anything, what will become of the Vegetarians? They ought certainly to get hold of Mr. STODDAERT's book without delay.

WE are rejoiced to hear our old friend, Mrs. RAMSBOTHAM, has had a nice little legacy left her. She intends "to investigate the entire sum in the Induced Free Cents."

A WORD FROM WINTER.

"Mild Winters encourage vain expectations.... The records tell us, with almost too much emphasis, that a mild Winter may be followed by a late Spring, and by the most unkind weather that we can imagine as intervening."—*Gardeners' Magazine*.

LEAVE the Yule-log alone,
For the Winter is ended,
And all folks must own
That the weather is splendid.
Here come the Spring hours,
And half blooms e'en a dim rose,
And 'mid many flowers,
We can welcome the primrose.

We've never seen snow,
And there's no harm in stating
That, as all men know,
We had small chance of skating.
Old Christmas was here,
He's a regular comer;
Why did he appear
As the herald of Summer?

The huntsmen we see
On each day don the scarlet,
And chase o'er the lea
What old "sports" call "the varlet;"
On hunting this year
Does no frost put a stopper,
Though still 'twould appear
That some men come a "cropper."

The gardener speaks,
With his words of dread warning,
We've had pleasant weeks,
But one day comes a morning
When frost bites once more;
Can't we say with good reason,
That never before
Was there seen such a season!

THE LATEST SPECIMEN OF A Nihilist.—Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOATE lecturing on "Nothing."

TEACHING THE OLD IDEA.

YESTERDAY afternoon the second of the series of the new and highly successful popular lectures recently inaugurated by Dr. MORELL MCKENZIE at the School of Dramatic Art was delivered at that Institution. As soon as it became known that the subject selected was "Hygiene in the front of the House," and that it would be handled by no less an authority than Dr. RAWLINGSON, F.R.M.S., the application for places was so great, that the one pupil, for whose benefit the series of lectures had been primarily intended, was instantly offered a half-holiday by the governing body, and every corner of the room was immediately filled by a distinguished and elderly audience, in some respects even more miscellaneous in character than that which had attended the previous lecture.

In addition to all the leading actors and actresses, teachers of elocution and singing, vocalists, amateurs, acrobats, Peeresses, celebrated Military and Naval Authorities, Members of both Houses of Parliament, and a large sprinkling of Provincial Mayors, prominent places were occupied by Messrs. CROSSAN and BLACKWELL, the Chairman of the London and North-Western Railway Company, Professor STOKES, the Beadle of the Burlington Arcade, and a host of other more or less well-known figures not hitherto publicly associated with the progress of Dramatic Art.

The Lecturer introduced his subject by defining "hygiene" as applicable to the "front of the house," remarking by the way, amidst a good deal of laughter, that although it was generally admitted that prevention was better than cure, a great many Managers failed to realise the method of producing a healthy condition in their receipts till they had lost them altogether. The first necessity of "hygiene" in the treasury was undoubtedly to avoid cold. This could only be effected by packing an audience well together, and keeping them physically occupied by clapping their hands. Audiences, however, required some stimulus on the other side of the curtain to warm them up to effort. A frost was, therefore, to be avoided. The wind might sometimes be raised by posters, and the public might literally be driven into the theatre for a night or two by violent puffing outside; but the secret of such a procedure soon got blown, and the Manager himself, as a consequence, at last

THE PREMIER'S WHITE ELEPHANT.

"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH HIM?"

MR. BRADLAUGH has explained more exactly than before the tactics he intends to adopt when the Session opens. He will not attempt to swear himself in before the Queen's Speech is read. This is what he proposes to do:—"He should go to the House on February 5. After leaving the cloak-room he would enter the House and take his seat in the part of the House open to Members only. After the Queen's Speech had been read he might, or might not, go to the table; if he did, no one could prevent him. The police could not, because they would be outside the door, and he would be inside. If he went to the table, Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOATE would object, or he would not. If not, then the oath was taken and the seat occupied; if he did, he (Mr. BRADLAUGH) could wait till he had finished, as he had done before, or take no notice of him, but swear himself in at once, and take his seat."

only found himself left out in the cold. This brought him to the recently-developed craze for decoration. There was a very baseless and unsubstantial belief now current that the mere trappings of the Auditorium and its approaches were in themselves a sufficient attraction for the public. This was a mistake. Such trappings caught nobody but the Manager. He might be left alone in his House to admire them, but if he did this he must put his foot in it. As to the public, they would no more stand mere stuff and padding on this side of the footlights than they would on the other. A splendid dado was a fine thing in the right place; but he might lay it down as an axiom of "Managerial hygiene," that the more persistently and lavishly the interior of a House was papered, the worse inevitably would be the ultimate condition of the treasury.

The Lecturer then, amidst some uproar, proceeded to make a vehement onslaught on the folly of several Managers who had obstinately refused to stimulate the "failing hygiene" of their respective establishments, by a recourse to a series of original five-act plays of his own, the dialogue of which he quoted, and the principal scenes and situations of which he was proceeding to illustrate on a black-board, when it was announced that the one pupil of the College, who had apparently been at a loss what to do with himself, had just tumbled down an area, in Argyll Street.

Upon this information being whispered by a distinguished Personage present to a member of the governing body, a vote of thanks to the Chairman was hurriedly proposed by the Deputy-Secretary, and—everybody present promising to come again next week and bring some fresh friends with them—the further hearing of the lecture unanimously adjourned.

FRIVOLOUS INQUIRY.—The sale of the Library of the Diss Book Club, recently dissolved, is announced in the *Athenaeum*. Our Tiresome Contributor writes to know if it was dissolved on account of its being a Diss agreeable Book Club, and whether the inspection of the books would be denominated a Dissolving View?

M. AICARD's new play at the Théâtre Français is called *Smilis*, but there is no laughter in it.



A GREAT DISCOVERY!

MR. PUNCH, SIR,

THE immense amount of eager curiosity exhibited by an excited and incredulous Public to learn the nature of the scheme that is to accomplish what no Act of the Legislature, nor all the benevolent ideas of the Philanthropists, nor all the wisdom of the Philosophers has hitherto succeeded in achieving—though but natural, has been almost overwhelming. I will begin by saying what my plan is not. It is not, then, a mere Utopian scheme that the incredulous scoffer need turn from with derision, or the impudent spendthrift with contempt, because it affects not him. It is not the wild dream of an enthusiast, but the calm development of a philosopher. Like all very grand discoveries, Sir, my great scheme can be stated so shortly, and so simply, that four words will suffice.

My scheme is “The Abolition of Rent!” I give your readers time to recover their breath at this mighty revelation, before further explaining its various details. Suffice it to say that I shall be able to prove not only to my own entire satisfaction, but to that of all other reasonable men, that my plan is as comprehensive and as just in its application, as it is bold and original in its conception. I sat down in my solitary chamber, at my well-worn desk, to consider the whole matter calmly, philosophically, and fundamentally.

What is Rent? Rent is the result of superfluity. It is a charge made by somebody for something he does not want, to somebody else who wants it very badly. If a man wanted his house, of course he would not let it to me. Can anything then be more ungenerous, can anything be more selfish, or more opposed to the purest principles of philanthropy, than to make me pay enormously for this trifling accommodation? Think too of the sad results of this very absurd arrangement. What is the greatest nuisance of our otherwise happy lives, if not from the very highest, certainly to the very lowest? Rent! What makes us all dread Quarter Day? Rent! Its abolition, too, strange to say, would not only largely benefit the many, it would also really benefit the few—whom, to a superficial thinker, it would appear to injure—by relieving them of a large amount of quarterly anxiety, induced by the uncertainty of their expected receipts, and of the possibility of having to enforce claims, that to a truly philosophic mind must be absolute torture.

What must be the agony endured by a son of Israel who has to turn out his miserable tenant from his one miserable room, because he or she cannot pay the miserable Rent?

What must be the torture of a sensitive house agent of Low Church prolixities who has to sell up a poor toil-worn clerk! What must be the moral despair of a professional philanthropist, who never hides his light under a bushel when joining in a fashionable public subscription, at having to issue an execution against the household goods of a poor stricken tradesman, or, with a profound sigh of regret, to make him a bankrupt, because he cannot pay his crushing Rent! All this poignant regret, all this mental torture, all this moral despair, will be at once and for ever at an end.

Rent is the first difficulty that besets the youthful pair, Rent is the last straw that breaks the bankrupt's back. Why then should this miserable vampire be allowed any longer to prey upon all alike, on the majority with the fangs of anxiety, on the minority with the fangs of remorse?

In my own poor case, which I doubt not is a representative one, I always feel a strong repugnance to this particular payment. Its very regularity is offensive to me, I detest having to take it nearly three miles, on a particular day, at a certain hour, or to incur an offensive reminder of what I certainly have not forgotten. My butcher's and baker's bills I pay with comparative willingness. I know and feel that I have received certain articles of food that have contributed considerably to my enjoyment; but what do I get, in exchange for my Rent, of a tangible character, that I can handle or taste or examine? Nothing, literally nothing. I must, of course, live somewhere. My Landlord is a wealthy Peer, who has, I am told, hundreds of houses similar to mine. If I and all his other tenants chose to leave what he calls his houses, and no other tenants could be found for them, he would be compelled to admit an inferior order of persons, whom he would have to pay for taking care of them, and preventing them from going to ruin, so that really I am, in addition to paying him an odious tax, in the shape of Rent, actually saving him in addition a large expenditure. Surely, surely, this cannot be just! and certainly, certainly, it is most inconvenient to me.

Besides, Sir, as we learn from various sources of information that the great object of all government is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, who can doubt but that my philanthropic scheme would achieve that desirable object in an eminent degree. In the sister country, the Law enacted lately that the more Rent a poor Tenant owed to his cruel Landlord, the more should he be excused from paying. This, Sir, was, I need hardly say, but a very small step in the right direction; mine goes the whole distance, for, with a simplicity and a completeness that would, I verily believe, disarm even a Land-Leaguer, I not only forgive all arrears in the past, but abolish all rents in the future.

The head of your statistical department has furnished me with some startling facts, from which I learn that the annual income of the country being £585,223,891 17s. 4d., omitting fractions, and rent being calculated at rather more than half of that amount, it follows, that my philanthropic scheme would relieve the rent-paying portion of the Public of the very handsome yearly payment of about three hundred millions of money, and, at the same time, relieve the comparatively small number of rent-receivers of an amount of deep anxiety, of mental torture, of poignant regret, and of moral despair, such as no pure philanthropist like myself can contemplate without a shudder.

What, Sir, is a contemptible sum of three hundred millions of miserable lucre, screwed out of the necessities of our poor human nature, compared with the noble gratification of having contributed largely, out of mere superfluities, to the happiness and contentment of thirty millions of our worthy fellow-countrymen, the toilers and spinners of our Native Land?

The first practical steps towards the realisation of my purely philanthropic idea, will be the formation of a strong Committee, and the collection of a large subscription for preliminary expenses. I have no wish to push myself unnecessarily into notice, so I at once announce that I should firmly refuse the position of Honorary President or Vice-President. No! my best and only reward will be the conviction that I have developed a noble idea that is destined to change the present sad condition of things in this wealthy land to one of peace, of satisfaction, and of prosperity. But, as of course it will be necessary that an efficient Secretary should be appointed to mould the affair into shape, I have no objection to accept such office, but, as I do not care about mere titles of honour, I should refuse the name of Honorary. Subscriptions may, in the first instance, be forwarded to the Punch Office, Fleet Street, under cover to the Secretary of “the Abolition of Rent Society, Limited.”

J. LAROUÉ.

“OLD TONGUE’S” STABLE TALK.

(Communicated by the *Hippopotamus* next door.)

BUSINESS seems fine, and buns excellent; but I don't care about these scientific fellows always hanging about, and poking me in the face with umbrellas. Looks suspicious. “Marks on my face”? Of course I've got marks on my face,—but what of that? “A dusty dirty dun-colour”? Well—who said I wasn't? What are they driving at, I should like to know? Botheration! Why don't those two blundering High Priests turn up? A little “Service” would soon set all this right. Besides, I'm beginning to feel quite small. Why, except by a learned Fakir who has several times offered me a sacred powder, I haven't been worshipped for three months and a half!

Ha! Here he is again! Taken his card-case out of his pocket. Calls himself “BALMANO SQUIRE.” Good name. Says he is a magician, and can make me black. What a lark!—but not if I know it. Have, however, accepted powder graciously, and put it into the *mahout's* curry by way of experiment. Wonder what colour he'll turn?

More scientific nuisances with umbrellas. Hear they've had a leader in the *Times* about me. Splendid advertisement, but it won't do to be run down in this fashion. When will “the clergy” turn up? Having a private entertainment on their own account at Liverpool, I'll be bound! Bother them! Feel I ought to do something beyond eating buns to show my sacred character. Good idea! Have some rum and stand on my head. Have done it. Effective.

That fellow, SQUIRE, wants to “cure” me now! Well, I never! And he's ruining me in the papers! Here are a couple of lines knocked off for speculative friends in Dacca—

“To have your praises sung, if you aspire—
Don't trust the business to BALMANO's choir!”

Come, that isn't bad for a sacred beast fresh to the language.

Crowds still pouring in; but feel in the worst of spirits. FLOWER has just been here, and said that that little bit of religious fun fixed for Monday won't be allowed to come off in the Gardens, after all.

Hear the High Priests have got something to do, as a stop gap, at the Aquarium. Wish I had. Too bad!—I shall wire to BARNUM at once. A precious country this, where even an Elephant can't have his *rites*! Call this the land of liberty? Gammon!

Mrs. RAMSOTHAM was talking to a friend about her recent journey from Calais to Nice. She remarked, “Yes, it was a very long way, certainly; but then we went all the way in a *coupon*, so we were not so very tired, after all.



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